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Letter dated 16 July 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twenty-second report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions [1526 \(2004\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution [2368 \(2017\)](#).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Kairat **Umarov**

Chair

Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities



Letter dated 27 June 2018 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities

I have the honour to refer to paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017), by which the Security Council requested the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to submit, in writing, comprehensive, independent reports to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, every six months, the first by 31 December 2017.

I therefore transmit to you the Monitoring Team's twenty-second comprehensive report, pursuant to annex I to resolution 2368 (2017). The Monitoring Team notes that the document of reference is the English original.

(Signed) Edmund **Fitton-Brown**
Coordinator
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Twenty-second report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities

Summary

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL),^a having been defeated militarily in Iraq and most of the Syrian Arab Republic during 2017, rallied in early 2018. This was the result of a loss of momentum by forces fighting it in the east of the Syrian Arab Republic, which prolonged access by ISIL to resources and gave it breathing space to prepare for the next phase of its evolution into a global covert network. By June 2018, the military campaigns against ISIL had gathered pace again, but ISIL still controlled small pockets of territory in the Syrian Arab Republic on the Iraqi border. It was able to extract and sell some oil, and to mount attacks, including across the border into Iraq.

The net flow of foreign terrorist fighters away from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic remains lower than expected. Many fighters melt back into the local population and stay there, while others may lie low in certain neighbouring States. No other arena has emerged as a favourite destination for foreign terrorist fighters, although significant numbers have made their way to Afghanistan. In Europe, the great majority of nationals who leave the conflict zone and neighbouring States return home. Member States welcome Security Council resolution 2396 (2017) but some consider it insufficient and others are struggling to implement it.

Al-Qaida (QDe.004) showed its resilience in the Syrian Arab Republic, where Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (ANF) (QDe.137) may now be the strongest terrorist group, and where Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri (QDi.006) and his lieutenants based in the Islamic Republic of Iran were able to influence disputes among the fighters in Idlib, Syrian Arab Republic. Al-Qaida and its affiliates remain stronger than ISIL in Yemen, Somalia and parts of West Africa, while its alliance with the Taliban and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan remains firm despite rivalry from the local ISIL affiliate. The sustained coalition of terrorist groups in Mali and the Sahel is concerning and could supply a model for future cooperation and interchange between terrorists in some arenas. Some Member States see Al-Qaida as a greater long-term challenge to international security than ISIL.

Immediate concerns include the information gap on the current state of ISIL finances and what that indicates about its strategic intent, and the potential impact on existing terrorist networks of battle-hardened returnees and relocators, including “frustrated travellers”^b and other sympathizers, who have leadership and other skills. Member States are concerned about the emergence, facilitated by the Internet, of new domestic terrorist threats, including from existing Al-Qaida networks. Meanwhile, the stabilization and reconstruction of ruined parts of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic pose other security-related challenges.

^a Listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq (QDe.115).

^b See S/2018/14/Rev.1, summary, footnote b.

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I. Overview of the threat

A. Status of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

1. By January 2018, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had been defeated in Iraq and was confined to small pockets of territory in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, Syrian government forces made progress against ISIL strongholds in the Damascus area. Nevertheless, ISIL showed greater resilience in the east of the Syrian Arab Republic, and even slightly recovered the initiative. Several Member States attributed this to a reduced contribution by the mainly Kurdish People's Protection Units contingent of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to the campaign in the east in early 2018. As the Syrian Democratic Forces increased its military activity once more, the momentum of the fighting appeared to be turning against ISIL again by June 2018.¹

2. Many ISIL fighters, planners and senior doctrinal, security and military commanders have been killed in the fighting, and many fighters and other personnel have left the immediate conflict zone. Many, however, remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, some still fully engaged militarily and others hiding out in sympathetic communities and urban areas.

3. Some Member States estimate the total current ISIL membership in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to be between 20,000 and 30,000 individuals, roughly equally distributed between the two countries. Among these is still a significant component of the many thousands of active foreign terrorist fighters.²

4. ISIL is still reverting from a proto-State structure to a covert network — a process that is most advanced in Iraq — but its fragments of territory in the Syrian Arab Republic give it more options and strategic depth on the border. Despite the damage to bureaucratic structures of the so-called “caliphate”, the collective discipline of ISIL is intact. Although he is reported to have been injured, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi³ remains in authority; it is just more delegated than before, by necessity, to the wider network outside the conflict zone. The general security and finance bureaus of ISIL are intact. The group's immigration and logistics coordination office is also intact, although it is having difficulty communicating and its chief has been killed.⁴

5. The Amaq news outlet of ISIL also continues to function in the eastern Syrian Arab Republic. Propaganda is an indicator of the financial and organizational health of ISIL and of its strategic intent. ISIL media activity reached a low point of output in September and October 2017; since then, it has stabilized at a higher level. The balance of media activity has moved from the ISIL core to the affiliates. ISIL propaganda remains weaker than it was and its brand may have been tarnished.⁵

B. Developing threat from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida

6. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters towards ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has essentially come to a halt. The reverse flow, although slower than expected, remains a serious challenge. One Member State describes the methodical

¹ Member State information.

² Member State information.

³ Listed as Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (QDi.299).

⁴ Member State information.

⁵ Member State information.

but opportunistic and fragmented movement of ISIL returnees and relocators as posing a “devolved threat”, with such returnees and relocators planning to bed down wherever possible, with the intent to return to active resistance, insurgency and terrorism when circumstances allow. The stabilization of the military position of ISIL may encourage significant numbers of foreign terrorist fighters to remain in the conflict zone.⁶

7. Despite all of this, some Member States have reported a fall in the rate of terrorist attacks in Europe, which began in late 2017 and has continued into 2018. There may be a causal connection between this and the military near-defeat of the so-called “caliphate”: ISIL command and control was damaged; the planned mergers of some bureaucratic units were not accomplished without disruption; and many of the most active terror-planners and operatives were killed in targeted strikes.⁷

8. Nevertheless, some Member States assess that the underlying drivers of terrorism are all present and perhaps more acute than ever before. This suggests that any reduction in terrorist attacks is likely to prove temporary, until ISIL manages to recover and reorganize, Al-Qaida increases its international terrorist activity or other organizations emerge in the terrorist arena.⁸ Already, Member States make a distinction between the decline in the number of successful plots and the sustained level of inspired terrorist activity, which suggests that what has driven this relative calm is not a loss of terrorist motivation but disruption of the capacity of ISIL to plan and execute attacks.

9. It seems likely that a reduced, covert version of the ISIL core will survive in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, with a presence also in neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, significant ISIL-affiliated numbers also exist in Afghanistan, Libya, South-East Asia and West Africa, and to a lesser extent in Somalia, Yemen, Sinai and the Sahel. The foreign terrorist fighter component of these varies and is largest in Afghanistan. There are also a number of small, emerging cells in other countries and regions. The rising threat from this global network will be diverse and hard to predict.

10. Meanwhile, the global Al-Qaida network continues to show resilience. Al-Qaida’s affiliates and allies are much stronger than those of ISIL in certain places, including Somalia, Yemen, South Asia and the Sahel. Al-Qaida leaders in the Islamic Republic of Iran have grown more prominent, working with Aiman al-Zawahiri and projecting his authority more effectively than he could previously. They have influenced events in the Syrian Arab Republic, countering the authority of Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani (QDi.317) and causing formations, breakaways and mergers of various Al-Qaida-aligned groups in Idlib.⁹

11. Hamza bin Laden (not listed) has also continued to emerge as a leadership figure in Al-Qaida. Al-Qaida’s leadership demonstrates strategic patience and its regional affiliates exercise good tactical judgment, embedding themselves in local issues and becoming players. While there is as yet little evidence of a re-emerging direct global threat from Al-Qaida, improved leadership and enhanced communication will probably increase the threat over time, as will any rise in the tendency, already visible in some regions, of ISIL supporters to join Al-Qaida.¹⁰

⁶ Member State information.

⁷ Member State information.

⁸ Member State information.

⁹ Member State information.

¹⁰ Member State information.

II. Regional trends

A. Levant

12. ISIL continues to transition from a proto-State structure into a terrorist network. It has lost large amounts of territory in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, and the cities that it once controlled have been liberated. Nevertheless, with the temporary reduction in SDF military pressure in early 2018, ISIL has been able to hold on to territory in eastern Dayr al-Zawr province, where it still controls some small towns and villages. Its main concentration of fighters, including the remaining foreign terrorist fighters, is on the eastern side of the Middle Euphrates River Valley, and it holds strategically significant ground in the Syrian Arab Republic on the Iraqi border.¹¹ ISIL is still able to mount attacks inside Syrian territory. It does not fully control any territory in Iraq, but it remains active through sleeper cells. It has fighters hiding out in Al-Anbar desert, the Ghadaf Valley and in Al-Hussainiah, west of Rutbah. ISIL has limited ground from which it can launch attacks inside Iraq, primarily targeting security force bases. A planned attack on 22 February 2018 against the Enazza border point with Saudi Arabia was disrupted.¹²

13. Member States report that many senior ISIL leaders have been killed in the conflict, including significant political, doctrinal, security and military figures. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi remains in control, although there are reports that he has been injured, and that ISIL has decentralized its leadership structure to mitigate further losses. Member States assess that, despite the casualties that they have suffered, many ISIL members intend to continue to fight. Others are now hiding in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, representing a potential threat to these countries and the wider region. Others have been arrested by Syrian government forces or anti-ISIL non-State armed groups, including Kurdish forces.¹³

14. ISIL has some residual presence in other Syrian localities, including a foothold in Aleppo.¹⁴ The densely populated Rukban camp in southern Syrian Arab Republic contains some 80,000 internally displaced persons, including families of ISIL fighters, a situation which Member States fear might generate new ISIL cells.¹⁵ The presence of the ISIL-aligned Jaysh Khalid Ibn al-Waleed (QDe.155) in Dar'a, in the extreme south-west of the Syrian Arab Republic is another concern for Member States in the region. It is in close proximity and on hostile terms with local elements of Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (ANF) (QDe.137) in Dar'a and Qunaytirah.¹⁶

15. The continuing transition by ISIL from a territorially based terrorist group to a covert terrorist network has made its finances more difficult to discern. Its financial reserves have declined but not dried up, and one Member State estimates its total reserves to be in the low hundreds of millions of United States dollars.¹⁷ It appears that ISIL can still draw on some of its traditional funding streams, including hydrocarbons and extortion, earning millions of dollars per month.¹⁸ In its previous report, the Monitoring Team highlighted the group's loss of control of oil and natural gas fields (see S/2018/14/Rev.1, para. 9); however, the slowdown of military progress against ISIL in early 2018, mentioned earlier, allowed the group to regain access to

¹¹ Member State information.

¹² Member State information.

¹³ Member State information.

¹⁴ Member State information.

¹⁵ Member State information.

¹⁶ Member State information.

¹⁷ Member State information.

¹⁸ Member State information.

some oil fields in north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic.¹⁹ As a result, oil remains a primary source of revenue, with the group using primitive methods to extract it, both for its own consumption and for sale to locals, in addition to the extortion of distribution networks.²⁰ ISIL also continues to “tax” commerce in areas it controls, as well as in contested areas, and to kidnap local businesspeople for ransom, extracting relatively small amounts of money in local currency.²¹

16. Despite the damage to the group’s quasi-State bureaucratic structures, ISIL maintains some financial structures, and financial direction still emanates from the core leadership.²² Reports persist that ISIL members have managed to invest in the region and infiltrate businesses, such as construction companies, money exchanges,²³ agricultural entities, fisheries and real estate, including hotels (see S/2018/14/Rev.1, paras. 12–13). Concerns have also been raised about ISIL financial facilitators and networks moving their operations to neighbouring countries.²⁴

17. ISIL is still able to channel funds across borders, primarily by relying on hawala networks and money service businesses (both unwitting and complicit ones), as well as cash couriers.²⁵ Furthermore, the ISIL core appears to continue to support its affiliates financially, although the extent of this support is unclear and may be declining.²⁶ A key tactic used by ISIL is to route funds through intermediary countries, with ISIL directing funds to a transit country before the funds are moved to the destination.²⁷

18. Some Member States in the region view the ANF menace as comparable to that of ISIL, with both posing a threat to the international community. ANF is assessed to remain the controlling force within the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) umbrella, which has accordingly been added by the Sanctions Committee as an alias of ANF. Syrian national Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani is the leader of both ANF and HTS. HTS maintains a position of strength in Idlib province, but is under pressure from other Syrian opposition groups.²⁸ Member States assess that HTS and its components still maintain contact with Al-Qaida leadership.

19. Member States report that Aiman al-Zawahiri, partly through the agency of senior Al-Qaida leadership figures based in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Abu Muhammad Al-Masri²⁹ and Sayf Al-Adl (QDi.001), has been able to exert influence on the situation in north-western Syrian Arab Republic. According to one Member State, HTS recently seized territories from Ahrar Al-Sham (not listed) and other armed groups after being reinforced by the arrival of military and explosives experts from Al-Qaida in Afghanistan. Some ISIL fighters, such as the leader of the ISIL Green Brigade in north-western Syria, have also joined HTS.³⁰

20. Nevertheless, al-Zawahiri has signalled dissatisfaction with some aspects of al-Jawlani’s leadership, especially his prioritizing of governance and the holding of territory over commitment to international terrorism. Dissent within HTS caused defections led by Sami al-Aridi (not listed) and Iyad Nazmi Salih Khalil (QDi.400),

¹⁹ Member State information.

²⁰ Member State information.

²¹ Member State information.

²² Member State information.

²³ See, for example, the Narrative Summary of Reasons for Listing of Al-Kawthar Money Exchange (QDe.157).

²⁴ Member State information.

²⁵ Member State information.

²⁶ Member State information.

²⁷ Member State information.

²⁸ Member State information.

²⁹ Listed as Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah El Alfi (QDi.019).

³⁰ Member State information.

which resulted in the formation of a new group under the name of Ansar al-Din. Other significant new groups opposing Jawlani include Jabhat Tahrir Suria and Helf Nusrat Al-Islam, which emerged from the merger of Hurras Al-Deen and Ansar Al-Tawheed.³¹ Member States assess, however, that HTS will hold together, despite the tensions within its ranks, with the Al-Qaida core and with other opposition groups in the area. All groups are expected to make a stand and fight any Syrian and international forces that attempt to dislodge them.

21. Extortion remains a primary source of financing for ANF, which earns money through its control of Idlib and checkpoints, including by “taxing” the movement of commercial commodities.³² Kidnapping for ransom of locals is another source of revenue, and the group may earn some funds through external donations.³³ Member States expressed continuing concern about the vulnerability of cultural sites, museums, antiquities and artefacts in areas under ANF control.

B. Arabian Peninsula

22. Member States assess that Al-Qaida leadership maintains a strong structure in the Arabian Peninsula, especially inside Yemen, where the organization continues to plan and orchestrate terrorist attacks in the wider region and beyond. The leadership of the Al-Qaida core recognizes Yemen as a venue for guerrilla-style attacks and a hub for regional operations. The lack of a strong central Government in Yemen has provided a fertile environment for Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (QDe.129) to establish itself.³⁴ Hamza bin Laden issued a statement in March 2018, citing the role of AQAP, threatening Saudi Arabia and calling on the people of the Arabian Peninsula to revolt.³⁵

23. In Yemen, sectarian polarization stimulated by the war with the Houthis attracted many recruits to AQAP, whose main base is still the city of Mukalla. It also has an operational presence in Wadi Belharith and Azzan in Shabwah, Wadi Obaidah in Ma’rib, Radda’a city in Bayda’, and Lawdar, Wadi and Mudiyah in Abyan. Against the backdrop of a security vacuum and a lack of public services in many areas, AQAP sponsors and participates in public activities, seeking to build a reputation for humanitarianism and governance (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 20). It has avoided being aggressive or confrontational with tribes, biding its time to gain more recruits, explore new sources of funds and prepare new young leaders. Its total strength inside Yemen is currently estimated at between 6,000 and 7,000.³⁶

24. AQAP Yemeni Emir Qasim Mohamed Mahdi al-Rimi (QDi.282) heads a precise leadership structure, including doctrinal, propaganda, military, security and financial subdivisions. Since mid-2017, the organization has suffered losses of leadership and field commanders owing to extensive Yemeni and international counter-terrorist operations. Some Member States report that explosives expert Ibrahim al-Asiri (QDi.291) may have been killed during the second half of 2017. Given al-Asiri’s past role in plots against aviation, this would represent a serious blow to operational capability.³⁷

³¹ Member State information.

³² Member State information.

³³ Member State information.

³⁴ Member State information.

³⁵ Cristina Maza, “Hamza Bin Laden, Osama’s son, denounces Saudi Arabia, calls for overthrow of monarchy in new Al-Qaeda video”, *Newsweek*, 19 January 2018. Available from www.newsweek.com/hamza-bin-laden-osama-saudi-785121.

³⁶ Member State information.

³⁷ Member State information.

25. Information from Member States in the region indicates that the group continues to use improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices as its preferred tactic against targets in Yemen, along with multiple rocket launchers (BM-21 and Grad-P), surface-to-air missiles (SA-7 and SA-9) anti-aircraft autocannons (ZU-23), mortars, mechanized infantry combat vehicles (BMP) and anti-tank missiles (TOW), which were used in late December 2017 in targeting a military training camp for elite forces in Wadi Dawan, Hadramawt governorate.³⁸ The group also acquires weapons during raids on military bases and training camps.

26. The Monitoring Team previously reported that AQAP had looted the central bank branch in Mukalla in 2015 (see S/2016/629, para. 24). One Member State has provided an update indicating that the group then offered to sell or exchange that stolen currency, the equivalent of \$100 million, at a discounted rate (\$600,000 per \$1 million stolen). Thus, having more money in 2015, AQAP could offer higher salaries and increase its membership. Nevertheless, in December 2017, AQAP failed in an attempt to rob private banks in Mukalla. The group continues to kidnap Yemenis and foreigners for ransom. It may also have some funds left from previous oil sales.³⁹

27. Member States assessed that AQAP was unique among Al-Qaida franchises in being entrusted with a leading role in propaganda and media on behalf of the leadership of the Al-Qaida core. In parallel to *Inspire*, the English-language Internet magazine, the *Al Masra* Arabic-language magazine is now the Al-Qaida platform where leaders of affiliates from the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (QDe.014), Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujaahidiin (Al-Shabaab) (SOe. 001) are interviewed and announce attacks.

28. Member States report that ISIL commands only 250 to 500 members in Yemen. It focuses on Yemeni and United Arab Emirates official targets inside Yemen. Although much weaker than AQAP, it tries to compete and frequently claim responsibility for high-profile attacks also claimed by AQAP.⁴⁰ The local ISIL affiliate is led by Yemeni national Muhammad Qan'an Al-Saya'ri (a.k.a Abu Usama Al-Muhajir) (not listed) who also directs military affairs. Yemeni national Radhwan Qanaf (not listed) is the deputy; Yemeni national Khalid Al-Marfadi (not listed) is head of financial affairs; and there are also military commanders of Ma'rib, Ibb, Dali' and Aden.⁴¹ Member States in the region assess that the extreme ideology and brutality of ISIL are unappealing to the Yemeni population.

C. Africa

1. North Africa

29. ISIL remains present in Libya, abetted by the fluid security situation, some tribal support and coordination with other terrorist groups when expedient. Despite the loss of Sirte and continued airstrikes, ISIL still has the capacity to launch significant attacks within Libya and across the border, reverting to asymmetric tactics and improvised explosive devices. ISIL cells persist around Tripoli, Misrata and Sabratah in the west, with a substantial presence in southern Libya around Ghat and Al Uwainat, and Ajdabiya and Darnah in the east.⁴²

³⁸ Member State information.

³⁹ Member State information.

⁴⁰ Member State information.

⁴¹ Member State information.

⁴² Member State information.

30. Estimates of ISIL numbers vary between 3,000 and 4,000 individuals dispersed across the country.⁴³ Its central command in Libya may lie in the triangle between Bani Walid, southern Sirte and Jufrah district.⁴⁴ The leadership structure is headed by Abu Moaz Al-Tikriti (not listed), an Iraqi national who is reportedly still alive despite reports of his death in an airstrike.⁴⁵

31. Al-Qaida continues to resurge in Libya, its ranks composed of elements of its historical component, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (QDe.011), as well as shura councils in Darnah,⁴⁶ Benghazi⁴⁷ and Ajdabiya. AQIM in the Sahel, led by Yahya Abu al-Hamam (not listed), maintains networks of mutual financial support and arms supply with Al-Qaida in Libya.⁴⁸

32. The mountainous areas in the west of Tunisia continue to harbour elements of ISIL and Al-Qaida. The country is affected by the fluid situation in Libya. In April 2018, the Tunisian Armed Forces began counter-terrorism operations around Kasserine against the AQIM affiliate Uqba Ibn Nafi Battalion and Jund al-Khilafah in Tunisia, during which it dismantled several ISIL sleeper cells in the region.⁴⁹

33. In Egypt, military operations, which began in Sinai in February 2018, continue against Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM). The group pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2014. Some Member States assess that the group may consist of up to 1,000 fighters and are concerned that it continues to exhibit signs of resilience.

34. Member States assess that returning foreign terrorist fighters, particularly those of North African origin, continue to pose a threat to the region. One Member State in the region noted that those returnees buoyed the ranks of Jund al-Khilafa in Algeria (QDe.151) and Al Mourabitoun (QDe.141), renewing the ability of those organizations to carry out operations.⁵⁰

35. ISIL continues publicly to threaten electoral processes in North Africa. Municipal elections in Tunisia and presidential elections in Egypt proceeded without incident despite such threats; however, ISIL attacked the High National Elections Commission of Libya in Tripoli in May 2018, resulting in 13 deaths.⁵¹

36. Member States reported that terrorist groups in North Africa derived substantial income from kidnapping for ransom, local extortion and the “taxing” of smuggling routes. During the reporting period, however, there was no evidence that they were directly involved in trafficking in drugs or persons.

2. West Africa

37. In the Sahel, Jama‘at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) successfully combined regional terrorist groups in an Al-Qaida-affiliated coalition,⁵² which increased attacks and propaganda against French, United States of America and other

⁴³ Member State information.

⁴⁴ Member State information.

⁴⁵ Member State information.

⁴⁶ Darnah Mujahideen Shura Council, a rebranding of Ansar al Charia Darnah (QDe.145).

⁴⁷ Benghazi Mujahideen Shura Council, a rebranding of Ansar al Charia Benghazi (QDe.146).

⁴⁸ Member State information.

⁴⁹ Member State information.

⁵⁰ Member State information.

⁵¹ Remarks of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya Ghassan Salamé to the Security Council on 21 May 2018.

⁵² As mentioned in [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 32. The groups are Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (QDe.014), Ansar Eddine (QDe.135), Al Mourabitoun (QDe.141) and the Macina Liberation Front.

international interests during the reporting period.⁵³ On 8 May 2018, AQIM urged attacks on French private companies.

38. JNIM leader Iyad ag Ghali (QDi.316) promotes combat action against security forces, rather than attacks on the population.⁵⁴ JNIM continues to rely on Al Mourabitoun to bring enhanced operational capabilities for complex attacks on symbolic targets (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#) para. 33). On 2 March 2018, attacks on the French Embassy and the armed forces headquarters in Ouagadougou were claimed by JNIM as revenge, after several Al Mourabitoun commanders were killed on 14 February 2018. On 15 April 2018, JNIM combined mortar and rocket strikes with breaches by suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, coupled with the use of small arms fire, on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and French military bases in Timbuktu, Mali.⁵⁵ A sleeper cell was neutralized in Ouagadougou on 22 May 2018. One Member State assesses that JNIM may be concentrating its efforts on the Ménaka area.

39. In absorbing the Macina Liberation Front (MLF), JNIM reinforced its territorial control. MLF dominates central Mali and gives a possible ethnic dimension to JNIM, which has developed specific propaganda on the local fight against foreign aggressors.⁵⁶

40. The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) is active mostly at the border between Mali and the Niger.⁵⁷ Although ISGS has a lesser footprint than JNIM, they both share the goal of destabilizing the Sahel and any normalization of life there, to maintain freedom of movement in the north and access to smuggling routes.⁵⁸ Current pressure on ISGS, and the lack of support from the ISIL core, will probably generate closer cooperation with JNIM, but not a merger.⁵⁹

41. In Burkina Faso, Ansarul Islam is divided in two factions. Jafar Dicko (not listed), the brother of deceased Ansarul Islam founder Malam Dicko (not listed), has a personal relationship and shared tactical interests with MLF leader Amadou Koufa (not listed).⁶⁰ Member States assess that JNIM might look towards Ansarul Islam, particularly Dicko's faction, as part of its strategy to expand the network further abroad. The second faction is led by Bolly Oumarou Idrissa dit Oumi (not listed), the notorious leader of a criminal network, who is personally close to ISGS.⁶¹ The impact of Ansarul Islam is considerable given its quasi-control over the Soum and Oudalan regions, where security has been undermined by assassinations and kidnappings. Despite limited capabilities — 90 fighters for Dicko and 70 for Bolly⁶² — Ansarul Islam can rely on a proven tactic, with attacks that are carried out by four to six groups of two people on motorcycles who then disappear in the local environment.⁶³

42. Member States assess that terrorists are taking advantage of territorial control and ethnic conflicts to radicalize populations, particularly in areas from which school professors have been driven out by intimidation.⁶⁴ The number of doctrinally based non-governmental organizations sending funds to local terrorist groups is growing, and Member States are concerned that radicalization is increasing the threat level in

⁵³ Member State information.

⁵⁴ Member State information.

⁵⁵ Member State information.

⁵⁶ Member State information.

⁵⁷ Member State information.

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⁶¹ Member State information.

⁶² Member State information.

⁶³ Member State information.

⁶⁴ Member State information.

the Sahel.⁶⁵ In the Mopti-Ségou area, the JNIM harassment strategy was successful as schools reopened under the control of extremists.⁶⁶ In Bamako, the balance of doctrinal guidance has shifted against the electoral process and in favour of radical elements.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, Boko Haram (QDe.138)⁶⁸ and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have had a similar impact in their areas of control, including the Lake Chad basin.

43. The predominance in the region of the cash economy, without controls, is conducive to terrorist groups funded by extortion, charitable donations, smuggling, remittances and kidnapping.⁶⁹ In Nigeria, 111 schoolgirls from the town of Dapchi were kidnapped on 18 February 2018 and released by ISWAP on 21 March 2018 in exchange for a large ransom payment.⁷⁰

3. East Africa

44. Al-Qaida affiliate Al-Shabaab remains the dominant terrorist group in Somalia.⁷¹ Despite sustained military offensives against it, the group has enhanced its capabilities as it retains its influence and appeal. It has diversified its modus operandi and easily adopts guerrilla warfare when attacked or retreats into the local community for safe haven to reorganize. In late 2017, Al-Shabaab reinforced its presence in Banadir near Mogadishu, enabling it to conduct recent attacks in central Mogadishu.

45. Al-Shabaab mounts attacks mainly within Somalia, targeting the troop bases of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and continues to conduct incursions into neighbouring countries. In early 2018, about 200 Al-Shabaab fighters were killed and others injured, which led to dispersal into smaller groups as a strategy for reorganizing. This disrupted its operations to some extent and had an impact on morale, as some fighters relocated to different parts of Somalia.⁷²

46. Al-Shabaab continues to deploy improvised explosive devices as its weapon of choice. Member States assess that the group has the requisite materials and expertise in assembly, that it has enhanced the potency of its improvised explosive devices by increasing the average size in recent years⁷³ and that it sources weapons and ammunition from local militia and defectors from the Somali National Army and through the smuggling of light weapons from Libya and Yemen (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 39). In late 2017, Al-Shabaab overran four Somali National Army bases and confiscated supplies, vehicles and military equipment of unknown value, which can sustain the group for some time.⁷⁴ During the reporting period, the funding sources of Al-Shabaab remained the same (see [S/2017/573](#), para. 47, and [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 40).

47. Member States assessed that, although ISIL in Somalia is fragile and operationally weak, it still presents a threat because Somalia remains a focus for probable future ISIL operations.⁷⁵ ISIL in Somalia has the strategic intent to expand to central and southern Somalia despite its current constraints. Towards this end,

⁶⁵ Member State information.

⁶⁶ Member State information.

⁶⁷ Member State information.

⁶⁸ Listed as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (QDe.138).

⁶⁹ Member State information.

⁷⁰ Member State information.

⁷¹ Member State information.

⁷² Member State information.

⁷³ Al-Shabaab increased the size of improvised explosive devices from 5 kilos to 40 kilos and the size of the explosive charges in vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices from about 100–200 kilos to 800–1000 kilos between 2015 and 2018.

⁷⁴ Member State information.

⁷⁵ Member State information.

Abdikadir Mumin (not listed) has been communicating with local fighters about his intentions to expand southwards to consolidate existing cells and win over some local fighters.⁷⁶ Additionally, as the ISIL core loses ground in the Syrian Arab Republic and comes under pressure in Libya, Somalis of dual nationality, and perhaps some other foreign terrorist fighters, may move to Somalia and other countries in the region, boosting ISIL numbers, skills and operational capabilities.⁷⁷ Specifically, some Somali foreign terrorist fighters operating in the Syrian Arab Republic have been in communication with Mumin and may choose to relocate to Puntland.⁷⁸

48. Some Member States continue to deal with foreign terrorist fighters affiliated with both Al-Shabaab and ISIL who are moving from their territories into Somalia, as well as with individuals relocating from other conflict zones who attempt to transit their territory by exploiting existing porous borders. Member States also reported ongoing recruitment, radicalization and training online, as well as forced conscription and camps established within Somalia, which are reserved for new foreign terrorist fighters.

49. Meanwhile, ISIL faces a resourcing crisis in Somalia. Its strategy to seize and take over supply points such as ports is not viable, so the group has resorted to robberies and other criminality to fund its activities. It still receives limited financial support and military supplies, including small arms and light weapons from ISIL in Yemen (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 42).

D. Europe

50. During the reporting period, the threat in Europe remained high; however, the tempo of attacks and disrupted plots was lower than during the same period in 2017. Member States said that much terrorist activity involved individuals with no prior security records, or others who had been dismissed as low risk. In addition, recent terrorist attacks were perpetrated by individuals who had never travelled to a conflict zone. The attacks tended to use cheap, unsophisticated methods, such as blades and vehicles, but were high impact because they were deliberately perpetrated in crowded civilian areas. There has also been an increased use or attempted use of triacetone triperoxide explosives.⁷⁹ Many terrorist plotters had prior petty criminal records.

51. ISIL continues to use social media to urge its sympathizers in Europe to conduct attacks in their country of residence. The 2018 FIFA World Cup became a specific target for ISIL propaganda aimed at inspiring lone or self-directed individuals to conduct attacks during the tournament. The group continues to disseminate various attack methodologies, as well as instructions for creating bombs and explosive vests. The recent trend has been away from directed and enabled attacks towards inspired attacks, which is a result of the degradation of the external operational capabilities of ISIL. Nevertheless, both ISIL and Al-Qaida have recently shown interest in more sophisticated attacks, including with chemical materials or remotely controlled improvised explosive devices.⁸⁰

52. Member States noted that flows of returnees and relocators from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic had not materialized to the degree expected, but that the vast majority of those who had successfully left the conflict zone and surrounding area had returned home rather than relocating elsewhere. Member States expressed concern that such individuals could increase the threat by disseminating their

⁷⁶ Member State information.

⁷⁷ Member State information.

⁷⁸ Member State information.

⁷⁹ Member State information.

⁸⁰ Member State information.

knowledge and skills related to drones, improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. Some ISIL fighters had the ability to assemble weapons from commercial off-the-shelf items. Beyond such operational impacts of the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, their return to Europe might galvanize local sympathizers.⁸¹ In this regard, measures taken by Member States that had largely prevented travel to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has created a different problem, with aspiring foreign terrorist fighters becoming “frustrated travellers”. ISIL has thousands of these supporters who are active online and represent recruitment opportunities for terrorist networks. Despite the weakening of the ISIL core and the reduced quality of its propaganda, the high quantity of messages sent using commercial encryption still has a strong impact in the spheres of radicalization, recruitment and instruction.⁸²

53. Radicalization in European prisons is a continuing and growing concern for policymakers. Meanwhile, some of those imprisoned for terrorist offenses in earlier years will soon be released, and a number of attempts planned in prison have already been foiled. On 29 May 2018, a radicalized inmate seized the opportunity of temporary release to kill two police officers and a bystander in the Belgian city of Liège.⁸³

54. Member States highlighted the complex challenge posed by female returnees from conflict zones: some saw women as part of the solution, but others saw them as a security concern and threat. While many women were confined to the household, some actively participated in the recruitment of new fighters on social media, some received weapons training and some took part in the fighting. Member States emphasized that returning children posed an even more complex challenge for law enforcement and social services, and it remained debatable what threat they might pose. The background and nationality of some children born in conflict zones are unclear. Many were exposed to extreme ideology, while some were involved in fighting and violence, including taking part in propaganda videos.

55. Member States reported that there was no concrete evidence of collaboration between terrorist groups and organized crime in Europe, beyond some overlap involving procurement and migration routes, especially in the Balkans. One Member State assessed that the main methods used by ISIL foreign terrorist fighters and sympathizers to raise funds included financial support from their families and relatives, as well as petty fraud, ranging from document forgery to small loans to counterfeit goods.

E. Central and South Asia

56. Al-Qaida still maintains a presence in South Asia. It adapts to the local environment, trying to embed itself into local struggles and communities. It is closely allied with the Taliban. According to one Member State, although ISIL poses an immediate threat, Al-Qaida is the “intellectually stronger group” and remains a longer-term threat. Some members of the Al-Qaida core, including Aiman al-Zawahiri and Hamza bin Laden, are reported to be in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas. Other members of the Al-Qaida core may leave for more secure areas.

57. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (QDe.010) still commands about 500 fighters in Afghanistan, concentrated in Faryab, Sari Pul, Jowzjan, Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces. Around another 500 Central Asian fighters are

⁸¹ Member State information.

⁸² Member State information.

⁸³ Member State information.

distributed between Khatiba Imam Al-Bukhari (QDe.158), Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (not listed), Islamic Jihad Union (QDe.119) and ISIL. The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (QDe.088) commands 400 fighters in Badakhshan.⁸⁴ Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is relatively isolated owing to increased security measures within the wider region, but the group continues to seek security gaps for opportunistic attacks. The group, Al-Qaida's newest affiliate, is ideologically inclined to carry out attacks inside India but its capability is believed to be low. According to Member States, the strength of AQIS in Afghanistan is estimated at several hundred people, located in Laghman, Paktika, Kandahar, Ghazni and Zabul provinces.⁸⁵

58. The ISIL core continues to facilitate the relocation of some of its key operatives to Afghanistan. One Member State reports that foreign terrorist fighters who are nationals of Algeria, France, the Russian Federation, Tunisia and Central Asian States have recently arrived in Afghanistan, and that Abu Qutaiba (not listed), the ISIL leader in Salah al-Din province of Iraq, has reportedly relocated to Badakhshan province of Afghanistan.

59. One Member State reports that some recent plots detected and prevented in Europe had originated from ISIL in Afghanistan. In addition to establishing a presence across Afghanistan, ISIL also attempts to have an impact on other countries in the region. According to one Member State, ISIL in Afghanistan is responsible for at least one attack in the Kashmir region.

60. In Pakistan, extensive counter-terrorist operations are reported to have led to a reduction in the number of terrorists and terrorist training facilities, and in the quantity of locally available explosive material in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Some of the terrorists were displaced across the border into Afghanistan.⁸⁶

61. In Afghanistan, ISIL persistently tried to expand its presence, despite pressure from the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, the international coalition and the Taliban. ISIL currently has its main presence in the eastern provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Nuristan, and is also active in Jowzjan, Faryab, Sari Pul and Badakhshan provinces in the north. ISIL has the intention to expand into Ghazni, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar and Uruzgan provinces. In Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad, ISIL already has sleeper cells and has committed disruptive, high-profile attacks, including against both Government and Taliban targets during the Eid al-Fitr ceasefire.⁸⁷

62. The numerical strength of, and the nature of the external threat potentially emanating from, ISIL in Afghanistan is the subject of much discussion among Member States. These issues are covered in detail in the ninth report of the Monitoring Team pursuant to resolution 2255 (2015) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities, published in May 2018 (S/2018/466). There has not yet been any consensus based on Member State evidence to substantially alter the key judgments in that report, which include the following: that ISIL has between 3,500 and 4,000 members in Afghanistan, including between 600 and 1,000 in northern Afghanistan (with both numbers on the increase); that it is led by Abu Sayed Bajauri (not listed); that the majority of its members and its leaders were formerly members of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (QDe.132); and that it may represent an emerging threat to Central Asian States.

63. In Central Asia, the terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan is perceived to be growing, with foreign terrorist fighters who have returned from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq increasing their numbers in Afghanistan. Returnees have skills in

⁸⁴ Member State information.

⁸⁵ Member State information.

⁸⁶ Member State information.

⁸⁷ Member State information.

weapons and improvised explosive devices, knowledge of warfare tactics, and connections with criminal groups. One Central Asian Member State reported that there were currently up to 1,000 fighters, including nationals of the Russian Federation and Central Asian States, making their way to Afghanistan, where there were already assessed to be 750 nationals of Central Asian States, mainly from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. They were considered to feel comfortable relocating among Afghans of Uzbek and Tajik ethnicity.⁸⁸

64. In Central Asia, Member States consider that there are indigenous sympathizers with ISIL. Nevertheless, one Central Asian State says that no foreign terrorist fighter is known to have arrived in the region since the beginning of 2018.⁸⁹ This needs to be monitored, given the natural interest of terrorists on either side of the Afghan border in each other.

F. South-East Asia

65. The terrorist threat to South-East Asia persists, particularly from ISIL-aligned groups in the region. Despite heavy losses in the southern Philippines in 2017, ISIL affiliates in the country are cash-rich and growing in membership.⁹⁰

66. In May 2018, Indonesia suffered a wave of attacks that killed dozens, including the attackers. Over two days, members of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 56, and [S/2017/573](#), para. 62), an ISIL-linked local network of cells whose spiritual leader is Oman Rochman (QDi.407), and their families carried out two successful attacks, while one was disrupted by the authorities.⁹¹ On 13 May, a family of six, including a 9-year-old girl, conducted three suicide bombings against Christian churches in Surabaya, while on 14 May a family of five detonated two motorcycle bombs at the entrance to the local police headquarters in Surabaya, killing all of the bombers except for an 8-year-old girl.⁹² Also, on 13 May, another family of six had been constructing bombs in nearby Sidoarjo when one prematurely detonated, killing two of the family members.⁹³ ISIL claimed responsibility for the successful attacks through its Amaq news outlet but seems to have played no direct role; nonetheless, it seems that the three families at least knew one another.⁹⁴ This could become a troubling precedent as a new modus operandi of using families, including women⁹⁵ and children, as suicide bombers.⁹⁶ These attacks were preceded by a riot in a prison in Depok near Jakarta and succeeded by a vehicle and sword attack on provincial police headquarters in Riau. ISIL also claimed responsibility for both attacks.

67. In the southern Philippines, the threat from terrorism persists despite losses suffered by groups linked to ISIL during the siege of Marawi City (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), paras. 58 and 59), with remnants regrouping, reactivating training camps and recruiting, attracting hundreds of followers both inside and outside the Philippines.⁹⁷ Furthermore, post-Marawi arrests of suspected foreign terrorist fighters

⁸⁸ Member State information.

⁸⁹ Member State information.

⁹⁰ Member State information.

⁹¹ Member State information.

⁹² Member State information.

⁹³ Member State information.

⁹⁴ Member State information.

⁹⁵ Previously, would-be female suicide bombers were arrested in Indonesia. See Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, “Mothers to bombers: the evolution of Indonesian women extremists”, 31 January 2017.

⁹⁶ Member State information.

⁹⁷ Member State information.

who were not South-East Asian, some of whom travelled to the Philippines using stolen or false documents and/or broken travel routes, indicates that the southern Philippines continues to be a magnet as a destination and transit point for foreign terrorist fighters from outside the region, in part because it presents an opportunity for militants to engage in actual combat and owing to the availability of firearms.⁹⁸

68. The local affiliate of ISIL, also known as ISIL-Philippines or Daulah Islamiyah, comprises several groups, including the remnants of the Maute Group,⁹⁹ led by Owaida Mulok Abdulmajib (aka Abu Dar) (not listed); the Maguid Group, led by Mohamad Kareem (aka Abu Muhamad) (not listed); the Turaifie Group, led by Esmael Abdulmalik (aka Abu Turaifie) (not listed); and the Basilan-based branch of the Abu Sayyaf Group (QDe.001) (ASG), led by several sub-leaders, including Furuji Indama (not listed).¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, with the death of Isnilon Totoni Hapilon (QDi.204), the affiliation of the Basilan-based ASG with ISIL is less clear, as many members have disassociated themselves from ISIL and focused more on criminal activities to raise funds rather than on ideology.¹⁰¹ As of the writing of the present report, a replacement for Isnilon Totoni Hapilon as overall leader of ISIL affiliates in the Philippines has not been identified.¹⁰²

69. ASG continues to be led by Radulan Sahiron (QDi.208) and to engage in kidnapping for ransom and extortion to sustain itself.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, kidnapping incidents, particularly kidnappings at sea, decreased in 2017 compared with 2016, possibly owing in part to the tougher maritime patrols under the trilateral cooperative arrangement among Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.¹⁰⁴ ASG has been targeting mostly locals in “express kidnappings” as opposed to more high-profile maritime kidnappings.¹⁰⁵

70. Recent domestic designations have highlighted the key role of intermediaries in the ISIL network in South-East Asia with regard to financing, procurement of weapons and training, and also demonstrated connections among regional players, as well as between regional operatives and the ISIL core.¹⁰⁶ For example, intermediaries have facilitated financial transfers from the ISIL core to ISIL affiliates in the Philippines and arranged bomb-making and firearm training for JAD recruits from Indonesia at camps in the Philippines.

71. According to Member States, ISIL affiliates in the Philippines do not lack financial resources. In addition to having received funding from the ISIL core, they secured millions of dollars by looting banks and homes in Marawi and have been using those funds to recruit, reportedly paying would-be fighters a joining fee of \$300 to \$400 and also providing a firearm.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸ Member State information.

⁹⁹ S/2018/14/Rev.1, para. 58; S/2017/573, paras. 59 and 60.

¹⁰⁰ Member State information.

¹⁰¹ Member State information.

¹⁰² Member State information.

¹⁰³ Member State information.

¹⁰⁴ Member State information.

¹⁰⁵ Member State information.

¹⁰⁶ United States Department of the Treasury, “Treasury sanctions ISIS-Philippines facilitator for terror support”, 30 April 2018; and “Treasury sanctions ISIS facilitators across the globe”, 9 February 2018.

¹⁰⁷ Member State information.

III. Impact assessment

A. Resolution 2347 (2017)

72. During the reporting period, the Team continued to engage with Member States and relevant international organizations on the looting and smuggling of antiquities by ISIL, ANF and other terrorist groups, and to promote awareness of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, together with the implementation of resolution 2347 (2017), as an operational tool for disrupting their ability to generate resources from this activity.

73. Several Member States reported to the Team investigations and seizures of antiquities from Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. In addition, archaeological sites in the region continue to be subject to illegal excavation and destruction since the competent authorities are unable to supervise all of such territories.¹⁰⁸ At the first level of trafficking, local populations earn money by bringing artefacts to collectors. The collectors regroup them and then pay taxes at each stage to Al-Qaida and ISIL members, where such terrorists are in control, until they have moved the products outside the region.¹⁰⁹

74. Member States highlighted that ISIL likely generated funding through these trafficking activities while at the peak of its territorial control, but it is difficult to assess whether it has stored objects or is otherwise still able to profit. Accurate data are elusive. Most looted and smuggled antiquities were small and easily negotiable online, which complicates counter-trafficking operations,¹¹⁰ as does the large number of fake artefacts on the market.

75. New trafficking routes and destinations were discovered, particularly in South America, for antiquities illegally removed from Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and the region.¹¹¹ One Member State highlighted that several positive matches were obtained using the International Council of Museums Red Lists,¹¹² which classifies endangered types of artefacts into 17 geographical categories. Some of these categories refer to regions of the world, while others are countries, including Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

76. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to highlight the usefulness of the International Council of Museums Red Lists as a tool for prima facie examination of cultural property by customs and law enforcement officers as well as for their training in this regard.

77. Based on the legal and regulatory framework, customs authorities of Member States are a pivotal stakeholder in the practical implementation of control mechanisms that can stem the flow of smuggled antiquities. In 2016, the Team identified administrative changes to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System of the World Customs Organization as one potential measure (see S/2016/213, para. 28). Chapter 97 of the nomenclature is divided into several general headings under which antiquities can be addressed: for example, heading (97.03) is designed

¹⁰⁸ Member State information.

¹⁰⁹ Member State information.

¹¹⁰ For example, a Member State presented a case involving boxes of antiques proposed for online sale that had been looted from the Idlib museum, which was controlled by the Al-Nusra Front for the People of the Levant.

¹¹¹ Member State information.

¹¹² International Council of Museums, Red Lists Database. Available from <http://icom.museum/resources/red-lists-database>.

to record trade of statues of any kind and age. This single classification could include a new wooden statuette or an ancient marble sculpture.

78. Similar rules regulate paintings, drawings and pastels (97.01), engravings, prints and lithographs (97.02), coins and other collectors' pieces of historical, archaeological and ethnographic interest (97.05). Further specifications, like subheadings according to age and/or historical or archaeological interest of the item, would enable national authorities to better identify, through a more detailed risk analysis, potentially relevant antiquities and hold those which are intentionally wrongly declared. This would provide more time for investigation into their origin and ownership history. Proposals for possible amendments to the nomenclature and to the explanatory notes to chapter 97 were recently submitted to the World Customs Organization and are currently under examination.

79. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States, encouraging them to support the proposed amendments to chapter 97 of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System that are currently under examination by the World Customs Organization.

B. Resolution 2388 (2017)

80. Several Member States informed the Monitoring Team that they welcomed the guidance contained in resolution [2396 \(2017\)](#) regarding returnees and relocators, including the handling of women and children leaving the conflict zone. Member States are striving to enhance information exchange on the identities of foreign terrorist fighters, and cooperation continues to improve gradually between countries of origin and transit countries. Many returnees and relocators have been prosecuted or otherwise processed. Nevertheless, some Member States were of the view that the resolution did not go far enough in ensuring that countries of nationality and origin took their fair share of responsibility for handling foreign terrorist fighters.

81. There are assessed to be between several hundred and 2,000 foreign terrorist fighters held in detention in northern Syrian Arab Republic, and a far greater number in detention in Iraq, where Member State estimates range between 9,000 and 20,000, depending upon whether family members are included. The Monitoring Team is mandated by resolution [2388 \(2017\)](#) to explore with Member States the issue of trafficking in persons and perpetration of sexual violence in armed conflict by ISIL and Al-Qaida. This issue may have affected some of the women and children who left the conflict zone and are now detained. Up to now, the Monitoring Team has met with a limited response to its efforts to collect information on this subject, despite the abuses of the so-called "caliphate". Member States assess that sexual exploitation has never been a significant source of income for ISIL, but they lack information on other aspects of the issue.

82. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States, reminding them of the provisions of resolution [2388 \(2017\)](#) and drawing attention to the likely availability of increasing amounts of relevant information over time, as more returnees and relocators, including women, are processed in transit or on arrival at their destinations. Member States should be encouraged to be alert to the opportunity to gather this information in order to identify persons or entities who transfer funds to ISIL in connection with the exploitation and abuse of women and children for listing by the Committee.

IV. Sanctions measures

A. Travel ban

83. During the first half of 2018, no travel by individuals on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List was reported to the Monitoring Team.¹¹³ Meanwhile, few foreign terrorist fighters entered the conflict zone, and the reverse flow of foreign terrorist fighters, or their dispersal to other conflict zones, proved slower than expected. Member States continued to enhance measures to address this flow, including by preventing travel, and collecting and sharing information bilaterally and multilaterally. Member States are concerned about the status and location of many foreign terrorist fighters still believed to be in Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic, who may change tactics and manage to relocate despite tightened border controls. Some Member States still face challenges in identifying foreign terrorist fighters, returnees or relocators at their air, land and sea border points. This presents significant security risks and may be exploited by ISIL (see [S/2018/14/Rev.1](#), para. 73).

84. Since the adoption of resolutions [2309 \(2016\)](#) and [2396 \(2017\)](#), the Monitoring Team has continued to engage Member States, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association and private sector stakeholders on efforts to implement advance passenger information (API) and passenger name record (PNR) systems to enable effective screening against the Sanctions List and databases listing foreign terrorist fighters. There has been progress in a number of Member States in the collection, processing and dissemination of passenger data. Currently, many Member States have API systems in place. In addition, some have upgraded from batch API systems to interactive advance passenger information (iAPI) systems. Compliance with regard to PNRs is much lower, however.¹¹⁴

85. Effective 23 October 2017, API became an ICAO standard. This requires Member States to establish API systems supported by appropriate legal and institutional frameworks and consistent with internationally recognized standards. Member States are expected to establish a “single window” for processing API data, meaning that data should be sent to only one government entity, which then dispatches the data to all relevant stakeholders. The single window aims to strengthen information sharing between airlines and government agencies, minimize errors in data transmission and enhance cooperation and coordination. Member States are required to have redress mechanisms for passengers who are unjustly affected, based on their API data. This is to ensure that passenger data are processed with safeguards to ensure data privacy, are obtained fairly and legally, are relevant and are not stored for illegitimate purposes or an excessive period of time. All API data should conform to specifications for the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport passenger list message (UN/EDIFACT PAXLST) format.¹¹⁵

86. If harmonized with effective watchlists and biometrics, API and PNR data can support the detection of listed individuals and foreign terrorist fighters, reduce the frequency of false positives during passenger screening at border points and facilitate legitimate travel. Nevertheless, challenges exist in several Member States, where work is needed to improve border screening, enhance effectiveness in the checking

¹¹³ Member State information.

¹¹⁴ Member State information.

¹¹⁵ International Civil Aviation Organization, International Standards and Recommended Practices, annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation Facilitation, 15th edition (October 2017), para. 9.8.

of passenger data against watchlists, collect biometric information and enhance the timeliness and effectiveness of information sharing.¹¹⁶

87. The Monitoring Team continued its engagement with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and noted that Member States continue to utilize INTERPOL databases and have provided information on foreign terrorist fighters, which has facilitated the arrest and prosecution of some foreign terrorist fighters or their facilitators. Nevertheless, in some Member States, border agencies and airlines lack access to such information: about two thirds of INTERPOL members do not have connectivity to the databases at their air, land and sea ports of entry.

B. Asset freeze

88. The Team continued to cooperate with the Financial Action Task Force and its regional-style bodies to collect information about its ongoing initiatives to counter terrorist financing, implement the asset freeze and promote awareness of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime. The Task Force adopted a consolidated strategy to combat terrorist financing and an operational plan to focus its work in ensuring regular updates about evolving terrorist financing risks, enhanced information sharing and appropriate and effective use of the Task Force standards and targeted United Nations financial sanctions to identify and disrupt terrorist financing activity. Despite the significant work undertaken to date, the Task Force's mutual evaluation process revealed that such targeted financial sanctions are not being utilized in an effective manner and that further efforts must be undertaken.

89. The loss of territory by ISIL has cut its revenue and may force it to diversify its sources of income. Member States anticipate a trend towards Al-Qaida-style asymmetric tactics and the planning of low-cost operations conducted by cells that exploit financing methods such as kidnapping for ransom, petty crime, credit and insurance fraud and financial crimes over the Internet. Furthermore, Member States highlighted the risk of the increased use of new techniques that make it easier to evade controls, such as electronic wallets, crowdfunding and cryptocurrencies.

90. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to draw their attention to methods of terror financing likely to become increasingly prevalent as ISIL loses its last quasi-State streams of income, to highlight the risk of an increased global incidence of kidnapping for ransom, among other revenue-generating crimes and methods of financing, to encourage Member States to continue to exchange information and expertise in countering these crimes and to draw attention to the fact that paying ransoms or making political concessions to terrorist groups finances and assists their activities and incentivizes further kidnappings.

C. Arms embargo

91. The Monitoring Team continued to focus on the issue of weapons reaching ISIL, Al-Qaida and their affiliates. In this regard, Member States insist that the continued flow of arms and munitions to terrorist groups remains a primary concern and that porous borders and the diversion to terrorist organizations of shipments intended for legitimate military or civilian use remain a challenge to counter-terrorism efforts.

92. ISIL and its affiliates reportedly reached a high level of sophistication in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, the weaponization of drones (see

¹¹⁶ Member State information.

S/2018/14/Rev.1, para. 87) and the production of improvised recoilless launching systems.¹¹⁷ Consequently, Member States assess that one of the dangers posed by returned foreign terrorist fighters is the knowledge garnered in conflict areas on the use of weapons and the manufacture of improvised explosive devices.

93. Member States reported that the use of improvised explosive devices is likely to increase as ISIL reverts to asymmetric tactics. A main precursor of choice for the manufacture of such devices where ISIL controls some territory is ammonium nitrate. ISIL in Afghanistan was reportedly using smuggled quantities of this compound (see S/2018/466, paras. 55 and 76) and Member States reported attempts to smuggle the same compound to Libya on-board a ship seized by Greece in January 2018. Improvised explosive devices made from triacetone triperoxide, which can be manufactured from common household items, were increasingly used by lone actors. Investigations made publicly available noted that this was the material used in the Surabaya bombings in Indonesia in May 2018. Member States reported that instructions for the construction of such explosives was, on occasion, obtained from social media platforms.

D. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List

94. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the Monitoring Team, is currently testing a new enhanced data model which can add biometric data, including pictures of listed individuals, to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List. The Secretariat noted that adding picture information will exponentially increase the size of the file, which may pose difficulties for downloading the list. The Secretariat confirmed that the current data model of the list is compatible with the advance passenger information system. To address the needs of end users in the financial, civil aviation and other relevant sectors, the Secretariat is also considering developing a search engine and a mobile application that will reduce the need for users to download and print the list.

V. Monitoring Team activities and feedback

95. Between January and June 2018, the Monitoring Team conducted 17 country and technical visits. It continued to promote the sanctions regime through its participation in 28 international conferences, meetings and workshops, including those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the European Union, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The Team also held two regional meetings of intelligence and security services focusing on the threat posed by ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities. The Team raised awareness among the participating services concerning the potential use of the sanctions regime as an integral part of a national counter-terrorism strategy and encouraged more intensive sharing of information in the region to counter the threat.

96. The Team continued its engagement with entities and associations in the financial, energy, antiquities, and information and communication technology sectors. During the reporting period, the Team continued to work with Internet companies and participated in several workshops organized by Tech Against Terrorism. During these events, the Team raised awareness of the provisions of the sanctions regime and the

¹¹⁷ Conflict Armaments Research, "Technical Report on Islamic State Recoilless Launcher Systems", April 2018. Available from www.conflictarm.com/technical/islamic-state-recoilless-launcher-systems.

Sanctions List. The Team cooperates closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in the production of reports of the Secretary-General as mandated in paragraph 101 of resolution [2368 \(2017\)](#). The Team remains an active member of the working groups of the Office of Counter Terrorism's Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, participating in its working groups. The Team also promoted attendance by the counter-terrorism agencies of Member States at the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28 and 29 June.

97. The Team welcomes feedback on the present report through 1267mt@un.org.

Annex**Litigation by or relating to individuals and entities on the Sanctions List**

1. The legal challenges involving individuals and entities on the Sanctions List, or whose names the Committee has removed therefrom, that are known to be pending or to have been recently concluded are described below.

Pakistan

2. The action brought by the Al Rashid Trust (QDe.005) regarding the application of the sanctions measures against it remains pending in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, on appeal by the Government of an adverse decision in 2003. A similar challenge brought by Al-Akhtar Trust International (QDe.121) remains pending before a provincial high court.¹

3. In addition to the two cases mentioned above, a trustee of Pakistan Relief Foundation (listed as an alias of Al-Akhtar Trust International (QDe.121)) has challenged the freezing of his bank account.²

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

4. The United Kingdom is defending judicial review challenges to its decision-making with regard to the designations under this sanctions regime of Abdulbasit Abdulrahim, Abdulbaqi Mohammed Khaled and Maftah Mohamed Elmabruk (all delisted). The cases are currently proceeding with hearings related to the use of closed evidence, and the level of disclosure required.³

¹ Information provided by Pakistan.

² Information provided by Pakistan.

³ Information provided by the United Kingdom.